

Food Allergies

Definition/ cut-off value

Allergic reaction to wheat, eggs, milk, corn or peanuts.

An adverse immune response to a food or a hypersensitivity that causes adverse immunologic reaction.

Presence of food allergies diagnosed by a physician as self reported by applicant/participant/caregiver; or as reported or documented by a physician, or someone working under physician's orders.

Participant category and priority level

Category

Priority

Pregnant Women	I
Breastfeeding Women	I
Non-Breastfeeding Women	III
Infants	I
Children	III

Justification

The only way to avoid a food allergy reaction is to eliminate the food. This requires the assistance of a nutritionist to help individuals obtain nutrients from other food sources (1,2).

The goal is to remove from the diet as many potential food allergens as possible while also providing optimal nutrition. Treatment of food allergies by a registered dietitian or certifying authority not only improves compliance by ensuring strict dietary avoidance through education and appropriate substitution, but also is essential for ensuring the nutritional adequacy of the diet (3).

Clarifications/ Guidelines

Food allergies will be limited to wheat, eggs, milk, corn or peanuts exclusively. Before assigning this risk code, be sure the specific food allergy is documented on the health history form.

We discourage the use of this code for infants receiving soy-based formulas. In order to use this code for infants a prescription for a soy-based formula is required accompanied by the diagnosis of a cow-milk allergy.

Self-reporting of a diagnosis by a medical professional should not be confused with self-diagnosis, where a person simply claims to have or to have had a medical condition without any reference to professional diagnosis. A self-reported medical diagnosis ("My doctor says that I have/my son or daughter has..." should prompt the CA to validate the presence of the condition by asking more pointed questions related to that diagnosis.

References

1. Institute of Medicine: WIC Nutrition Risk Criteria: A Scientific Assessment; 1996; pp. 184-186.
2. Berkow, et al.: Merck Manual; 1992; 16th Edition.
3. Grand, Stupen, and Dietz: Pediatric Nutrition: Theory and Practice; Butterworths; 1987; pp. 549-570, 571-578, 651-664.
4. Lawrence, Ruth A: Maternal and Child Health Technical Information Bulletin: A Review of Medical Benefits and Contraindications to Breastfeeding in the United States; 1997; pp. 14-17.